

York River Yacht Haven is located on Sarah's Creek, near the mouth of the York River on the lower Chesapeake Bay. It offers a wide variety of yard services as well as marine supplies and nautical parts. Approximately 300 wet-slips are available for lease or rental, and almost 90 boats are stored in long term dry storage. There are two restaurants on-site, *The River's Inn* and *The Crab Deck*. *Commonwealth Yachts*, a yacht broker, is also located at the marina.

Working to Enhance Water Quality

The York River Yacht Haven was certified as a Virginia Clean Marina in September of 2002. Since pledging to work toward becoming a Clean Marina, York River Yacht Haven has implemented various changes to promote environmentally-responsible boating and marina operations. Most



markedly, however, are the great strides that they've made in the area of "species restoration", specifically oysters. As a result of their involvement in Clean Marinas Program, the marina has developed a oyster aquaculture program under the floating docks. They have constructed a series of 25-gallon containers full of oysters under the docks, through which water is forced by a floating upweller system called "Flupsie".

Because a mature oyster can filter 50 gallons of water per day, the oyster culture will improve the quality of the water surrounding the marina.

York River Yacht Haven was the recipient of a Boating Infrastructure Grant which helped finance new docks for transient boaters and the oyster culture operation. They intend to distribute some oysters to "home-dock" gardeners, donate some for oyster restocking, and sell some oysters, but the overall goal is to increase boater awareness of the marine environment and improve water quality.

The marina has also taken great care to protect habitat by building new floating docks with 100% plastic decking. Because the docks have fewer pilings, there is significantly less impact to the bottom habitat. The use of environmentally neutral materials prevents the leaching of toxic substances into the water column. The disturbance of habitat was minimized in earlier construction by building Dock 8 over marshland, keeping the habitat intact.

Other environmentally-friendly techniques used by the York River Yacht Haven are the following:

- Posting signs indicating proper fueling techniques, pump-out use, and recycling policy
- Installing backflow shutoffs and breakaway fittings on fuel stations
- Maintaining pumpout and offering free service to patrons
- Recycling oil, antifreeze, and solvents
- Educating boaters on impacts of environmentally irresponsible actions
- Using fluorescent lights and reusing printer paper as notepads
- Trapping and filtering runoff from pressure washing of boats
- Having accessible written emergency response plans for potential hazards to the marina
- Reviewing emergency procedures before high traffic weekends
- Maintaining emergency response equipment (i.e. fire extinguishers, oil absorbent pads, etc.)
- Incorporating BMPs into contracts and requiring boaters to review contract yearly
- Recognizing boaters who prevent pollution in the newsletter

- Publicizing environmentally-responsible actions such as installing an oyster culture system, which is an under dock oyster aquaculture system that helps to improve water quality
- Training staff to respond to emergencies
- Making available fuel absorbent material at fuel stations
- Conducting painting and repair in a covered area and using a vacuum sander

York River Yacht Haven has done an exemplary job of making their marina not only more environmentally friendly but also environmentally enhancing. The addition of the oyster aquaculture will create significant increases in water quality once the process is completely implemented. With continued involvement in the Virginia Clean Marina Program, the Yacht Haven will strive to replace all docks with floating docks in order to minimize impact on habitat and expand the oyster aquaculture operation.



Through agreement with the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP), York River Yacht Haven has also been recognized as an “Environmental Enterprise” or E2 facility. VEEP is the Virginia DEQ’s program to encourage the development of Environmental Management Systems and

pollution prevention as tools for achieving long-term improvements in environmental performance. As such, it is hoped that York River Yacht Haven will not only maintain its status as a Clean Marina, but will continuously improve upon its current activities. For more information on VEEP, see <http://www.deq.state.va.us/veep>.



For more information on York River Yacht Haven, contact Dan Bacot at (804) 642-2156, email marina@ryh.com, or check out their website at <http://www.ryh.com/>.



The Virginia Clean Marina Program is a voluntary partnership to reduce nonpoint source pollution to Virginia’s Coastal waters by helping marinas and boaters become more environmentally responsible. <http://www.deq.state.va.us/vacleanmarina>. For more information, please contact Harrison Bresee by email at hpbiii@vims.edu or by phone (804) 684-7768.

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